

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group held on
Monday, 13 March 2023 at 5.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins – Chair
Councillor Katie Thornburrow – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Tim Bick Peter Sandford
Neil Shailer Simon Smith
Dr Richard Williams

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Laurence Damary-Homan (Democratic Services Officer), Ciaran Davis (Planning Policy Officer), Emma Davies (Principal Sustainability Officer), Jonathan Dixon (Planning Policy Manager), Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne (Planning Policy Officer), Matt Paterson (Strategic Planning Consultant), Bruce Waller (Principal Planning Policy Officer) and Lizzie Wood (Senior Planning Policy Officer)

Councillors Pippa Heylings and Martin Smart were in attendance as guests.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for Absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With respect to Minute 4, Councillor Dr Richard Williams declared that his employer, the University of Cambridge, had made comment as part of the consultation.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation, the Group authorised the Chair to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2022 as a correct record.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOBS

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report. The Jobs section was presented by the Senior Planning Policy Officer with support from the Planning Policy Officers (Ciaran Davis and Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne) and the Senior Planning Policy Officer. In response to questions, clarity was provided over the objections to policy J/FD and the desire to avoid language school students taking properties out of the private rental sector; officers agreed that clarity on what “private housing” defined in the context of the policy.

Logistics and retail spaces were discussed, and officers informed Members that, as raised in the economy evidence update, there was an increased need for logistics space. The Group was informed that provisions for logistics space had been made in the First Proposals, including around the A14 services area, but that officers were continuing to develop this policy in order to meet the local need, including the need for last mile delivery facilities. Officers assured the Group that assessment and analysis for the needs of all types of business facilities were being assessed and would be incorporated into the draft Local Plan. Regarding retail, officers referenced the annual retail surveys which showed that there were low vacancy rates in retail spaces, but that further work would continue, in conjunction with consultants, to further assess retail needs. Class E use was discussed, and officers acknowledged the challenges and limitations on control over change of use

that accompanied the introduction of Class E; Article 4 was referenced as a tool for control, but officers informed the Group that the criteria to apply the article was challenging and required a strong evidence base. Officers informed Members that further work would be undertaken to ensure the Local Plan would reflect the Planning Authority's ability to control retail space.

Concerns over the AirBnBs in the region were raised and officers informed the Group that, as part of the updates to the evidence base, consultation would take place with large employers, who often offer short term accommodation to assist new employees in moving to the area, on the use of aparthotels and the impact they were having. Officers also explained that on new developments it would be easier to implement restrictions and covenants to limit the use of new dwellings to residential, with further exploration of how these could be enforced being undertaken.

A point was raised on affordable workspace and the growth of companies; concerns of companies growing and thus increasing their demand for space, potentially preventing new businesses from utilising affordable workspace were discussed. Officers acknowledging these concerns and informed the Group that they were looking to existing examples of affordable workspaces, such as those in London, and would explore options to prevent issues arising through appropriate criteria and percentages of occupation.

With regard to remote working, officers referenced the new homes size standards as the mechanism for control to ensure that new homes provided adequate space for working from home. Members expressed a desire to ensure that the remote working policy also covered the needs of those in education and called for the provision remote working facilities outside of the home.

A question on comment 58021 and the perceived lack of support for growth of technology clusters, as specified in the National Planning Policy Framework, was raised. The Group was informed of the context around the specific comment and Members were assured that the Local Plan would ensure that the required support for the development of clusters would be delivered.

The Infrastructure section of the report was presented by the Strategic Planning Consultant with support from the Planning Policy Officers (Ciaran Davis and Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne), the Senior Planning Policy Officer and the Principal Sustainability Officer.

A query was raised over changes to national planning policy and the introduction of the infrastructure levy to encompass the financial contributions from developers to infrastructure works around new developments; concern was raised that initial funding for infrastructure works would have to come from the Local Authority initially, with developers making payments prior to first occupation. The Group was informed that these changes were part of the Government's Levelling Up Bill which would replace both the contributions from the community infrastructure levy and Section 106 contributions, with the new infrastructure levy covering all payments in a single lump sum contribution. Officers acknowledged that the changes to legislation around developer contributions could pose a challenge but stated that changes of this scale on a national level usually happen over an extended period, with further consultations being undertaken by the Government before the changes were to be implemented., and that these changes were unlikely to come into force prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan.

Members discussed policy I/ST and the multi-organisational approach to sustainable transport management and queried as to how the Local Plan fitted into the overarching mechanisms of sustainable transport infrastructure implementation. Concern was raised regarding the utilisation of freight trains to reduce the burden on road-based goods delivery and Members expressed a view that the First Proposals could benefit from further references to train-based goods delivery. Further comment was raised on the adequacy of Park & Ride provision in the region. Officers detailed the relationship between Government funding for sustainable transport and the local Transport Authority (the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority), as well as the input given by other

bodies into the transport strategy, such as the Greater Cambridge Partnership. The assessment process for opportunities for the implementation of transport hubs was detailed by officers, and the potential impact of the East-West Rail scheme was explained. It was clarified that the Planning Service was not the Transport Authority and that the Local Plan and the First Proposals sought to respond to wider transport strategies and other sustainable transport opportunities as they arose. The Group was informed that the Planning Service was working closely with partner organisations to ensure they were kept abreast of the transport provisions that would be introduced by the Local Plan.

With reference to policy I/ST, a question was raised on if this policy would cover matters related to traffic management and traffic calming measures. Members were informed that part of the policy's purpose was to deliver low traffic neighbourhoods, thus traffic calming measures, such as low speed limits or physical speed reduction infrastructure, would be part of the remit of policy I/ST. Further explanation was provided on how developers would be informed of the requirements and expectations around providing active travel infrastructure, with direction coming from both the policy level and design guidance. The Local Planning Authority's collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council to produce an "active travel toolkit" was referenced, as were national policies and guidance on the policy area.

Policy I/EV was discussed and, regarding parking, Members raised concerns over the reliability and accountability of private management firms who held the responsibility for parking enforcement in some areas. Officers stated that this was a matter that was outside of Planning but that they would explore this issue further and see if concerns could be mitigated through the Local Plan. Regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging points, Members raised concerns that relying solely on Building Regulations to provide the framework for EV charging provision was not sufficient. Officers confirmed that, in their view, Building Regulations were insufficient to ensure the desired level of provision of EV charging and assured the Group that the Local Plan would provide a framework to give the Planning Authority to seek more EV charging, where appropriate, than required by Building Regulations. Further concern was raised by Members on the use of management companies to manage common EV charging spaces and officers informed the Group that oftentimes charging points are tied to individual properties, in some cases developers would help provide the installation and management of charging points and in most cases EV charging management would not be linked to management companies.

Discussion was held on localised energy systems and microgrids. Officers informed the Group that localised energy infrastructure was desirable but not achievable at all scales of development due to the requirements for specialist input- it was advised that it was more likely to be implemented on larger sites. It was stated by officers that wording would be included in the Local Plan to encourage localised energy infrastructure, where possible, across the range of sizes of developments and this was endorsed by Members. Reference was made to the emerging Net Zero Carbon policy and the requirements it would bring to provide renewable energy production in new developments. Wider discussion was held around energy infrastructure planning, funding and implementation and officers offered clarity on how this would be considered both in the Local Plan and strategic development of the region.

Green infrastructure was discussed and, whilst the Group noted that the Biodiversity section of the Local Plan would cover green infrastructure, Members expressed a desire to ensure that green infrastructure was delivered. Officers informed the Group that the infrastructure delivery plan and viability plan would cover a wide range of infrastructure issues and would incorporate green infrastructure where appropriate.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair informed the Group that the meeting was the last of the cycle to assess the responses to the First Proposals. Members were informed that they would be given details of future meetings when they had been arranged. The Chair thanked officers for all the

work that had gone into the First Proposals and the analysis of the consultation responses, as well as the ongoing work to continue to develop the Local Plan. Thanks were also given by the Chair to Councillors Thornburrow and Sandford for taking on Chairing and Vice-Chairing responsibilities in her absence at previous meetings.

The Meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.
